1:Lipkind E-5 (1937) 1948 SP9 Caraja SP9

THE CARAJÁ[1]

By WILLIAM LIPKIND

TRIBAL DIVISIONS AND TERRITORY

The *Carajá* are a river people who since pre-Columbian times have held as the central portion of their territory the inland Island of Bananal, which is formed by the great fork of the Araguaya River (lat. 8°–17° S., long. 48°–52° W., map 1, *No. 1*; see Volume 1, map 7). They must be regarded as an independent linguistic family for the present; their language displays no convincing similarities to any other recorded South American language.

The term *"Carajá"* is used to designate the entire people as well as the largest of the three tribal divisions; the other two are the *Shambioá* and the *Javahé*. The *Carajá* proper have 20 villages on the western or main branch of the Araguaya River, widely spread from Leopoldina south of Bananal clear down to the end of the Island. The *Shambioá*, now nearly extinct, have only two villages left, a little way below Conceicão. The eight villages of the *Javahé* lie on the eastern or minor branch of the Araguaya River and on the small streams within Bananal. The general location and the relative sizes of the three groups have remained the same since the earliest times.

The native names give some notion of intergroup attitudes. All three groups regard themselves as a single people and use a name meaning "we" to distinguish themselves from other tribes. The *Carajá* proper are called the "great people" by the other two groups. The *Shambioá* are the "companion people." The *Javahé* are called by a name which is used generally to mean "Indian" and bears the pejorative connotation "backwoodsman" or "hick." There is a possible analysis which makes it the "old people" but, even if this etymology is correct, the word no longer has that meaning.

Dialectical differences are slight and other differences not very great, with the *Shambioá* occupying a middle position culturally between the other two groups. This account is based on field work with the *Carajá* proper and refers to the other groups only where they exhibit important differences.

[1] The present description of the *Carajá* is based on the author's field work during 1937, done under the auspices of the Department of Anthropology, Columbia University.

/1/ Preface

1/4 In the following I am publishing the material in the field of art which I collected on my expedition to the interior of [101] [122] Brazil. In 1908 I undertook an ethnographic research trip for the Leipzig Museum für Völkerkunde to the Araguaia River (Goiás Province), in the course of which I became acquainted with the Karajá /Caraja/, Šavajé /Javahe/, and Kayapó /Cayapo/ (1)

[104] [113] 1. For the transcription of the Indian names I use the sound-notation given by Meinhof in: Neumayer, Anleitung zu wissenschaftlichen Beobachtungen auf Reisen /Introduction to Scientific Observations on Journeys/, 3rd edition, p. 484.

Indian tribes settled there. Whereas the visit among the latter two tribes was limited to only a few days, I was in constant contact with the Karajá for a full five months, so that I was able to penetrate more deeply into the culture and thought world of this people.

126 In addition to the easily acquired ethnographic objects and most important ethnographic facts, I was also able, by means of an ever deeper intimacy with these Indians, to obtain all kinds of objects and information otherwise difficult to procure. In this way I was able, above all, to collect considerable material which permits us insight into the artistic creativity of the Indians, and thus into an important area of their spiritual life. And, moreover, this is not only drawings, which are already available from several Indian tribes, but above all a great many plastic representations (plaited, wax, and clay figures), which arouse our interest all the more since we possess only a few of these from South America. Again, among the drawings, in addition to figure representations, /2/ the manifold plaiting patterns are particularly important, since they will provide a valuable contribution on the question of ornamentation (1).

[101] 1. In the following, in addition to drawings

121 /43/ Three years ago G. P. Murdock published his "World Ethnographic Sample." It goes without saying that an endeavor of this scope can only be incomplete. Now, as far as the Carajá, one of the nine tribes classified under the heading "Eastern Brazil," are concerned, the set of 30 characteristic features of this society in Murdock's attempt displays significant gaps and serious inaccuracies. It is my intention, here and now, to remedy this state of affairs as well as possible, in order to contribute from my side, while concerning myself with only one case among 565, to a fairer calculation of the human probabilities.

114 To accomplish this task I shall use as a base the data that
122 I was able to collect personally, in the company of my wife
101 and aided by the National Swiss Foundation for Scientific Re-
127 search, during the rainy season of 1954 to 1955 among the Carajá of the south, as well as, naturally, on the information from our predecessors in the field, Ehrenreich, Krause, Baldus, and Lipkind above all. I am using this opportunity to express the great regret that I feel every time I think of the fact that the rich materials collected by Lipkind have never been published in a satisfactory fashion. The Carajá, although they have been known for a long time, are basically misunderstood. To be fair, it must be added that they themselves do not make the task of investigators easy, and it goes without saying that under these circumstances my own contribution must remain fairly fragmentary in view of the too short period of our stay among them.

121 On the other hand I am convinced that the presentation of facts alone — allegedly pure facts — does not help us to become better acquainted with the human condition, and the second aim of my article is to present to you a first attempt at interpretation of the data concerning the Carajá kinship system, which, not without reason, was left blank in Murdock's attempt.

128 To facilitate the comparison I shall follow the framework of the columns of the "World Ethnographic Sample." The
433 Carajá cultivate primarily tropical tubercles, although maize
34 is not lacking; true domesticated animals are absent.
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[231]

/iii/ Foreword

12] In the year 1908, under the auspices of the city of Leipzig,
[122] I undertook an ethnographic research expedition into central Brazil, the purpose of which was the scientific investigation, with the most modern methods and instruments, of the Indian tribes visited, as well as the salvaging of visible examples of their cultural life for the Leipzig Museum für Völkerkunde. Its
[101] goal was the region of the middle Araguaya /Araguaia/, between the 15th and 9th degrees, southern latitude, with the Indian tribes of the Karajá /Caraja/, Šavajé /Javahe/, Tapirapé, and Kayapó /Cayapo/.

114 The expedition set out on 29 January 1908 and returned to Leipzig on 7 February 1909. The program was, by and large, carried out; only the proposed advance to the west had to be cut short because of insurmountable geographical difficulties.

126 Abundant material in the form of observations of all kinds, photographs and phonographic recordings, sketchbook drawings, etc. was brought back. The ethnographic collection, containing more than 1,100 specimens, has been handed over to the Museum
113 für Völkerkunde zu Leipzig. Of my findings I have published up
126 to now only reproductions of the dance masks of the Karajá Indians, in connection with a description of the use of masks by this tribe (in the Jahrbuch des Museums für Völkerkunde zu Leipzig, Volume 3, Leipzig, 1910), as well as a study of the art of the Karajá Indians (in the Bässler-Archiv, Vol. 2, No. 1, Berlin, 1911), in which the material collected by me on the artistic activities of the Indians in the plastic arts and drawing was reproduced.

128 All the rest of the material is now to be presented to the public here.

As a first part, and before the actual results, I am giving a report on the expedition /the first part is omitted in the translation/. I regard this as very important; for the findings of the expedition can be properly evaluated only if one knows how they were obtained, in other words, the conditions under which the studies were made. Thus, the travel report gives the external course

/iv cont./

131 comprehensive preliminary studies are required, since almost
128 all comparative studies in South American ethnography are as yet lacking. It will therefore be reserved for a later publication. I know that with this kind of self-limitation I am certain to have the approval of many of my colleagues.

122 Wherever I was, here at home or over in Brazil, the expedition found extensive help and support among people willing to assist us, /v/ and I do not wish to fail to express my warmest thanks to all of them. This thanks is owed first of all to the Council of the City of Leipzig and to the Leipzig City Council Board for the willingness with which they put at my disposal the means for the expedition, as well as to Herr Consul Dr. Herrmann Meyer, who was kind enough to make available a large sum for the enterprise to insure its subsequent successful completion and to assist me in an advisory and an active capacity with regard to the equipment. I owe equal thanks to Herr Prof. Dr. Weule and Herr W. v. d. Steinen for assistance and advice in working out the plan and assembling the scientific and personal equipment, and also to Herr Privy Councilor Prof. Dr. Hans Meyer for the use of instruments and rifles. No less effective was the assistance which my expedition found in Brazil itself. First of all, thanks are owed to the Imperial German authorities, especially to the Ambassador, Baron v. Reichenau, then to the gentlemen of the Consulate in Rio de Janeiro and to the Councilor of the Embassy Flügel in S. Paulo. They all gave me their assistance and procured for me extensive privileges from the Brazilian central government as well as the governments of the individual states, for which I should also like to express here my profound gratitude to these governments. Equal thanks are owed to our German countrymen, Herr Marxsen of Rio, Herr Naschold of S. Paulo, and Herr Öckinghaus of Goyaz /Goiás/, who, in an unselfish and devoted manner, supported me in every way and gave me the most valuable pointers which alone made it possible for me to carry out my entire journey according to schedule. And finally, but no less cordially, I must thank my camaradas who so willingly took upon themselves all the strain and effort, the German Adam, the

/v cont./

Brazilian Antonio, the Indians Pedro the Faithful, Benedicto the Merry, and the many other Indians who gladly and willingly helped me after the initial mistrust had vanished, and who, since I regarded myself as one of them, rewarded my confidence in them with equal confidence.

The printing costs were in part defrayed by the budget of the Museum für Völkerkunde with the participation of the Vereins für Völkerkunde zu Leipzig. To both bodies I should also like to express here my gratitude for this assistance.

Leipzig, May 1911 The Author.

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6:Cook M-3,4 (ca. 1900) 1909
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648 forest, the course usually adopted, whether the work is done by "secular" agents, or by friars paid by the government, is to select a site within fifty or one hundred miles of the villages of the tribe, and erect the desired buildings. Then, when all is ready, the agents repair to the villages and try to secure a number of boys, either by making presents of knives and beads to the parents, or by kidnapping the children. This latter method was pursued with the Karayá, [593] for the parents refused to part with their children for any consideration. The friars are opposed to having the entire families of the Indians live near their schools. But, on the other hand, they do desire the mixed Portuguese speaking multitude—the ignorant, superstitious, immoral, rum-drinking people—called "the civilized ones," to "live at their feet." These people are more profitable to the friar than the Indians, for they give him much money to perform various priestly functions. But the primitive people have no money; nor have they learned to value these priestly services. Therefore, when the "school" is organized, the young savage, besides hearing the doctrine taught, has ample opportunity to see it exemplified.

122 I stayed with a private family at Leopoldina while waiting 000 to descend the river. In the meantime, I occupied myself going among the people, reading God's message to them and talking with them. I had many interesting and enjoyable experiences. I heard, long afterward, that the village blacksmith, with whom I had talked and left a Bible, was reading, or having it read to him daily, and was literally devouring it. It was the joy of his life. He would often exclaim with emotion as he listened to the reading. "Great is Jehovah!" Perhaps few who read these lines can understand the great worth of this Book to this sincere man in his declining years, dwelling at this remote, forsaken and forgotten spot, rarely reached by the fewest printed lines of any kind.

Another man, a visitor from up the river, was ill, and wished me to suggest a remedy for him. I thought that if he would forsake his vices, he would probably regain his

6:Cook M-3,4 (ca. 1900) 1909
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health. So I gave him a Bible and had a long talk with him. He said to me, "I am a Catholic, not a Republican," and displayed the coat of arms of the Brazilian monarchy tattooed on one wrist, a heart thrust with arrows on the other, and the initials of the heir to the throne over the spot where he thought his heart should be. Though steeped in vice, he thought himself a good man and an heir of heaven. He was astonished when I read to him some verses from God's Word; especially when I read Gal. V. 19-21, for he crossed himself in alarm. Once, he said he did not believe there was a Devil, or a hell—that the man himself was the Devil. I replied that this might be true in some cases.

I found the people of Leopoldina extremely poor. One of the leading men, who was intelligent and industrious, got a Bible from me. Days having passed without his handing me the thirty cents asked for the book, the fact was disclosed that he did not possess even this much money, but had hoped to get it in payment for somework. Failing to get it, he returned the book; but I, apprised of the situation, made him retain the book. Scarcely any currency was in circulation. So they bartered: any one needing rice traded beans for it, or gave a fishhook in exchange for some line. They tried to sell me old jewelry and other junk in order to realize some cash.

One day, I went fishing on the Araguaya with the Cherentes in a big canoe. It was an experience which afforded me keen pleasure, and of which I shall always cherish lively memories. Everything was strange and wonderful to me;—my unusual companions and our boat; the great, red torrent of the river into which many streams were vomiting logs, brush heaps and other débris, that, falling into line, moved down the river in a long, solemn procession; the tropical surroundings of the river; the angling for large fish; the many great beasts that I saw sporting in the water, and lastly, the flocks of birds of flaming plumage that stocked the air.

At length, the day came to begin our long, strange voyage down the river. We had secured for the purpose three canoes.

6:Cook M-3,4 (ca. 1900) 1909
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The largest, which carried the bulk of our effects, was made by heating a big dugout over the fire, spreading it, then building side planks on this foundation, and roofing the stern half with palm-branches. The second canoe was merely a big dugout; while the third was a small dugout with which to run about and fish. It required much skill to stow our voluminous baggage in the canoes.

The embarkation was a regal event to the people of Leopoldina. The entire population, dressed in festal attire, came down to the river to see us off. I thought my companions would never get through leave-taking; there was almost no end of conversing and embracing. Our party consisted of the teacher and her son, her black cook and half-breed Chavante attendant, the five Cherentes, and myself. We had also twelve dogs and pups which some one fancied we would need. Some days later, we added to our crew two black men and three Karayá Indians. We had no need of so many men; but they assisted mightily to devour our limited supply of provisions.

At last, all was ready for the pomp and pageantry of the embarkation; and pushing off, we swung out into the current in the presence of a numerous company, amid the firing of guns, the bursting of dynamite rockets, the blowing of bugles and horns, the yelling and cheering of the people, and the barking and yelping of the dogs. This is a characteristic Brazilian way of doing things. Considering the character and conduct of our company, we were very far from being a missionary party, I much regret to confess. Moreover, I saw with dismay, after we had cast off, that the canoe men had been supplied with *cachaça*, the native rum, and were intoxicated; worse, that there was a demijohn of the brutalizing liquid in the second canoe. So, the navigating we did was scarcely more intelligent than that of a rotten log. The alcoholized men paddled and splashed wildly about, yelling continually in mad glee; while our cargo of dogs, appearing to really understand the seriousness of the situation, howled a dirge. We were in great danger of being thrown upon the rocks and

7:Lipkind E-5 (1938-1939) 1940
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CARAJÁ COSMOGRAPHY

By WILLIAM LIPKIND

The Carajá are an isolated people inhabiting a large territory slightly north of the geographical center of Brazil. During 1938 and 1939 I lived with the Carajá and collected a large body of textual material which forms the basis of the generalized presentation of Carajá world-view which follows.[1]

The Carajá universe is very small. Their own territory (Bananal), an island formed by a large fork of the Araguaya river is its center. To the west the great Chavante plateau stretches out to the huge river in which the sun goes down. All night the sun moves through the underworld and in the morning he comes up out of another river which is the eastern boundary of the world. If you paddle many days downriver, you will come to a village of the transformer Kanashiwe, the world's northern limit. An equal journey upstream will take you to its southern limit, another village of Kanashiwe.

The Carajá are perfectly acquainted with the middle portion of this parallelogram. Every beach, high bank, wood and lake along the Araguaya, every body of water and distinctive patch of ground within Bananal, is known and has a name. The tributaries are known in less detail and only up to a few days' journey from their mouths. Inland from the rivers their knowledge peters out after a short distance and you are soon in mythical country.

To the Carajá this world seems very large. The journey to its northern and southern limits is the initiation journey of the dead. No man since legendary times has gone very far toward the eastern and western boundaries, and, besides, there are two other dimensions, the underworld and the sky.

In the underworld, the original home of the Carajá, there was neither sickness nor death. As the emergence myth states, "More people kept being born. Nobody died. There wasn't room enough. When a man got old, he sat there in one place without moving. Kaboi couldn't add any more houses to the village. It was full. A new father was lying on the mat. It was time to eat honey. He went off hunting honey. While he was hunting he heard a *seriema* (Portuguese name of a bird) sing. He scooped a hole toward it and came out. He found fruit at once and decided to return. When he got back he gave his folk the fruit to taste. They found it very good and wanted to come out. They invited the others to come with them. Wobedu sent his folk out first and he went first among them. Kaboi came

[1] The work was financed by Columbia University.